

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 JIDDA 03918 271510Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----006704 271515Z /41

R 271320Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2165
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 3918

EXDIS TREAT AS NODIS

E.O. QQYTWC GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PDEV, PINT, LE
SUBJECT: PARTITION OF LEBANON

REF: BEIRUT 2707

1. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT MANY PEOPLE IN SAG OR MANY SAUDIS,
FOR THAT MATTER, HAVE ANY GREAT NOSTALGIA FOR LEBANON OF
THE OLD DAYS. WITH THE INCREASED PROSPERITY SINCE 1973, AND
THE GREATER EASE OF TRAVEL NOW EXISTING, THEY DO NOT NEED
LEBANON FOR VACATION SPOT OR FOR PLACE TO STASH THEIR MONEY.
COLLAPSE OF LEBANON INTO CIVIL WAR HAS DESTROYED ANY ILLU-
SIONS THAT SAUDIS MAY HAVE HAD ABOUT LEBANON AS SHOWCASE
FOR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN MIDDLE EAST. IN FACT, IT
IS OFTEN CITED EVEN BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN PRIVATE
AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF WEAKNESS OF PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM,
WHICH AS THEY SEE IT CARRIES ITS OWN SEEDS OF POTENTIAL
DESTRUCTION. LEBANON IS NOT EVEN SEEN ANYMORE, AS IT USED
TO BE BY SOME, AS OPEN WINDOW BETWEEN WEST AND ARAB EAST
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 JIDDA 03918 271510Z

THROUGH WHICH THERE WAS AN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS. SUCH EXCHANGES NOW
TAKE PLACE IN RIYADH, JIDDA, AND DHAHRAN AND IN BERKELEY,
CHICAGO, AND BLOOMINGTON. OLD PARAPHRASE OF VOLTAIRE THAT
IF LEBANON DID NOT EXIST, WE WOULD HAVE TO CREATE IT IS
NO LONGER BELIEVED IN SAUDI ARABIA, IF IT EVER WAS.

2. HAVING SAID THAT, WE BELIEVE SAUDIS WOULD STILL BE

UPSET TO SEE LEBANON PARTITIONED, MAINLY BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT BE SURE WHAT IMPLICATIONS OF PARTITION WOULD BE. IT WOULD INTRODUCE GREAT ELEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY AND PERHAPS INSTABILITY IN A KEY AREA OF MIDDLE EAST. FOR ONE THING, THEY WOULD NOT WANT TO SEE ENCOURAGED ANY SYRIAN AMBITIONS FOR GREATER SYRIA THAT MAY STILL REMAIN, AND A DISMEMBERED LEBANON COULD PROVIDE SUCH ENCOURAGEMENT. SECONDLY, SAUDIS WOULD NOT WANT TO SEE ISRAEL EXPAND NORTHWARD IN TERMS OF EITHER TERRITORY OR HEGEMONY, AND A DISMEMBERED LEBANON COULD HAVE SUCH A RESULT. THIRD, THEY WOULD SEE LEBANESE PARTITION AS PRODUCING FRAGILE CONGERIES OF MICRO-STATES INSTEAD OF ONE MINI-STATE. RESULT COULD BE VIRTUAL TINDERBOX WHICH COULD EXPLODE INTO WAR AT ANY TIME WITH WIDE-RANGING EFFECTS IN MIDDLE EAST.

3. WETHINK THAT SAG POLICY WILL CONTINUE TO BE TO DO EVERYTHING IT CAN TO ENCOURAGE RESTORATION OF LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY TO THE WHOLE OF LEBANESE TERRITORY. HOWEVER, SAG ACTIVITIES WILL BE CONFINED TO THE FIELDS OF MORAL SUASION AND LIMITED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

4. WE DO NOT THINK THAT FRAGMENTATION OF LEBANON WOULD HAVE ANY EFFECT ON U.S. INTERESTS IN SAUDI ARABIA UNLESS IT LEADS TO A WIDER CONFLAGRATION. IF INSTABILITY AND/OR WAR ENSUED, EFFECT ON U.S. INTERESTS IN SAUDI ARABIA
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 JIDDA 03918 271510Z

WOULD DEPEND ON DEGREE AND NATURE OF ROLE U.S.CHOSE TO PLAY AND EXTENT TO WHICH THIS INVOLVEMENT WAS CONTROVERSIAL IN ARAB WORLD AND/OR CONFLICTED WITH SAUDI VIEWS. HANDS-OFF POLICY COULD ALSO PRESENT PROBLEM IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES. CERTAINLY, FAILURE OF U.S. TO OPPOSE ACTIVELY ISRAELI MOVE TO ABSORB SOUTH LEBANON WOULD NOT PLEASE SAUDI ARABIA, ESPECIALLY IF U.S. CAME UNDER SEVERE ATTACK FROM LARGE NUMBER OF ARAB COUNTRIES FOR AN ALLEGED CONSPIRACY TO PERMIT OR PROMOTE ISRAELI EXPANSION. ON OTHER HAND, DECISION TO KEEP OUT OF PURELY ARAB SQUABBLE IN LEBANON WOULD PROBABLY NOT CREATE ANY SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR U.S. IN SAUDI ARABIA, IF CONFLICT COULD BE CONTAINED WITHIN LEBANON.
WILEY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, POLITICAL STABILITY, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, FORM OF GOVERNMENT, PARTITION, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978JIDDA03918
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: OA
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P850033-0120
Format: TEL
From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780511/aaaaajal.tel
Line Count: 108
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a2703895-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 2707
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2537789
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PARTITION OF LEBANON
TAGS: PBOR, PDEV, PINT, LE, SA
To: STATE SS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a2703895-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014